

LIVESTOCK IN THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA

Strengthening the Role of Actors and Livestock Professionals: A Necessity to Stimulate Regional Trade

Practical problems illustrating the low capacity of actors

Bureaucratic obstacles persist

With the reduction or even the dismantling of checkpoints along trade routes and the abolition of customs duties on cattle exports to other UEMOA (*Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine*) countries, professionals recognise that significant progress has been made in the free movement of people and goods. Steps are being taken to accelerate this process within the ECOWAS (ECOWAP) zone.

However, some actors stress the continuing bureaucratic “obstacles” involving illegal taxes imposed along international roads. Cattle-traders continue to pay these illegal taxes, amounting to between 2,000 and 5,000 CFA francs per animal, depending on whether it is demanded at a police, customs or gendarme checkpoint. Sometimes money is required (between 100,000 and 450,000 CFA francs) for escorting a convoy along some sections of road. But no security official actually accompanies the vehicles. Trade is slowed down as a result and the consumer ends up paying more than he should for animal products.

Ministries dealing with livestock are less efficient because they are not wide-ranging enough

Staffs of government ministries handling livestock matters are mostly veterinarians and other animal experts. But the sector requires more technical, social and economic expertise. These ministries and

Box 1 – Low capacity of actors hinders growth of the livestock sector

Difficulties linked to the free flow of regional trade and cross-border transhumance highlight the difficulties of actors to insist on their rights under community rules. Two examples:

1. Imposition of illegal taxes is a major obstacle to the live cattle trade in West Africa. At Mali’s borders with Senegal and Côte-d’Ivoire, for example, an extra tax of about 75,000 CFA francs is payable when a customs official gets into a truck to count the animals himself.
2. ECOWAS introduced an International Transhumance Certificate (ITC) in 1998 (Decision A/DEC.5/10/98) but, in practice, transhumant livestock breeders still have lots of problems at the borders.

This causes intra-regional trade in animal products to stagnate and increases conflicts over use of pastoral resources in coastal countries.



departments should incorporate other fields, such as sociology and economics, enabling them to get to know actors better and better understand their problems, including how their social and productive organisations work, which is essential to encourage serious change in this productive sector to benefit the region's economies. Organising livestock actors is key to this change and to increasing productivity, profitability and more sustainable ecological management.

How can actors contribute to stimulating animal production sectors in the Sahel and West Africa?

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Women filtering milk before pasteurisation

The example of milk production

Milk production in West Africa is 13.2 kg per person, making the region 61% self-sufficient (www.ssdairy.org). Countries make up the deficit by importing powdered milk and other dairy products. Senegal imports more than 35 billion CFA francs worth of dairy products, Mali and Niger about 12 billion and Burkina Faso 6-7 billion. But there is no serious sub-regional or inter-state coordination. However, agro-livestock farmers specialising in milk production are getting organised. The sector requires a lot of investment in better genetic material (costly animals with high milk potential) and infrastructure.

Burkina Faso and Mali have quite effective professional dairy organisations. Actors in Mali organise collection and delivery of milk to processing plants in Bamako, and the situation is similar in Burkina Faso, where one actor has structured livestock breeder organisations around his dairy in Kosam Bahdio which has a daily capacity of 1,000 litres and collects curd and pasteurised milk from several provinces.

In outlying urban areas, actors who have introduced Brazilian animals are steadily organising and setting up groups such as artificial insemination clubs (Burkina Faso) to reduce the cost of buying animal sperm.

Greater organisation also provides better access to other dairy production and processing services. In Burkina Faso, for example, the local milk producers' association (APPL) has helped its members to greatly improve processing and the percentage of milk officially unfit for consumption fell from 37.5% in 2004 to 6.3% in 2006. There are other such examples in Mali, Niger and Senegal.

Combating non-African imports of frozen chicken

Civil society groups – NGOs and especially animal products sector professionals – play a technical, political and trade union role. They do not always succeed but do manage to protect some local producers, such as those in the modern and traditional poultry (chicken breeding) sectors, especially in Senegal and Cameroon where they have joined together to lobby governments over the invasion of imported chicken parts. Their actions seem all the more legitimate, because the situation often defies logic. In Cameroon, for example, industry professionals have noted that: "When you import a tonne (1,000 kg) of frozen chicken, you put a local farm of 500 chickens out of business, kill the

"Improving the organisation and professionalism of actors and regional cooperation between them will improve the region's dairy production."





possibility of growing 1.5 tonnes of maize and soya, and loose three rural labourers (1.5 jobs at the farm, 1.5 producing maize and 0.25 making baskets), as well as two urban jobs (0.5 for plucking and 1.5 for selling the chickens).”

Effects on the trade balance and job creation

The efforts of actors in Senegal have promoted national production, which was severely affected, restoring more than 10,000 jobs, and nationwide production of chicken meat is once more generating substantial income, about 28 billion CFA francs a year – 10 billion from chicken meat and 18.7 billion from eggs to consumers.

Reducing dependence on non-African meat imports

In some countries like Mali and Burkina Faso, farmers have been very successful in developing a traditional poultry industry for national markets, with production to spare for export, protecting them against massive imports of chicken parts. Although data is incomplete, it is estimated that Burkina Faso consumes some 29 million chickens a year, which is about 39 billion CFA francs injected into the rural economy, not counting the many actors involved indirectly in the industry. Apart from this national consumption, sales of guinea-fowl eggs estimated at 2.7 billion a year and poultry exports to Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Ghana and Gabon at between 3 and 6 billion a year. Mali also exports traditional poultry to Côte d’Ivoire, a market it shares with Burkina Faso. Actors have used this base to strengthen their organisation, and the Burkina Faso government has focused on the traditional poultry sector in its development and poverty reduction policies.

What steps could strengthen the actors’ capacity?

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National level

1. Integrate capacity-building and organisation of agricultural actors, especially in the livestock sector, in the poverty reduction policy documents.
2. Promote a legal and financial environment which encourages actors to organise and be more professional, and promote the private sector in the livestock sector.
3. Promote public and private investment in strengthening organisational capacities and the professionalisation of the private actors in the livestock sector.
4. Support the structuring and strengthening of professional organisations so they can set up institutions that lead to national-level structures representing all socio-professional categories in the livestock sector.

Regional level

1. Operationalise the Development Programme of Market Information Systems and strengthen trader capacities (ECOWAS/IFDC) in all ECOWAS countries.
2. Set up an ECOWAS regional observatory on marketing and trade in animal products.
3. Set up a cross-border transhumance observatory within the ECOWAS zone as an information tool and to strengthen the capacities of actors (producers and traders).
4. Focus on livestock sector professionals within the framework of the implementation ROPPA’s Strategic Framework of the Professionalisation of Peasant Farmers.





Photos: Jean S. Zoundi, World Bank;
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**For more details, please refer to the complete document:
“The Future of Livestock in the Sahel and West Africa: Potentials
and Challenges for Strengthening the Regional Market”,
available on SWAC website: www.oecd.org/sah**



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